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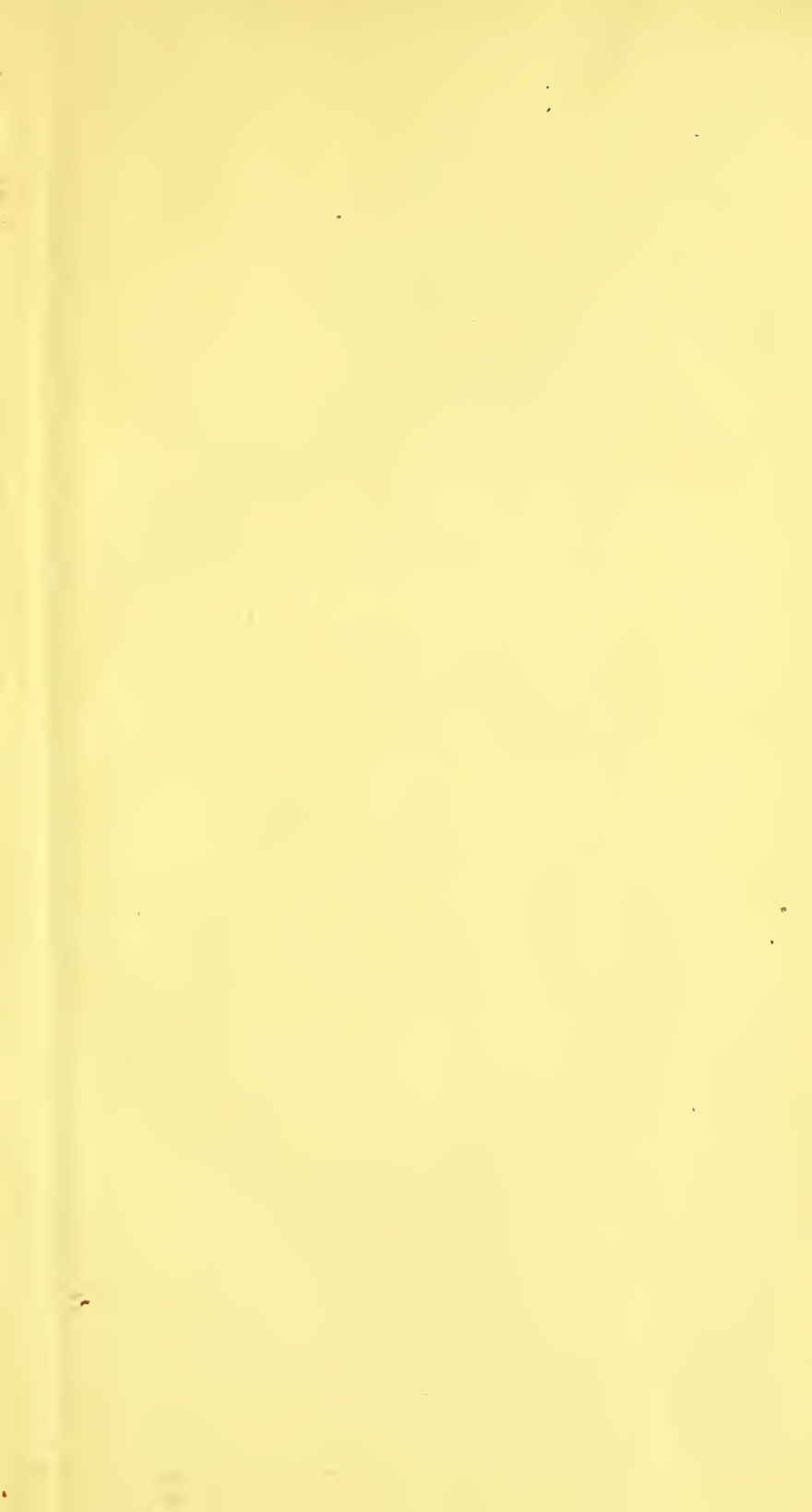


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MR. MELLEN'S ADDRESS,

AT NORTH-YARMOUTH,

JULY 4, 1825.



for his nephew

Address,

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE CITIZENS OF

NORTH-YARMOUTH,

ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE:

JULY 4, 1825.

BY GRENVILLE MELLIN.

Printed by request of the Committee of Arrangements.

PORTLAND :

PRINTED BY D. & S. PAINE,
1825.

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Address.

FELLOW CITIZENS,

IT is with feelings of uncommon satisfaction that I congratulate you on the arrival of *this* morning of our Independence. At all times and in all places the return of this national birth day is to Americans a joyful one—but the present occasion brings with it a newly added splendour, and associates itself with events that will long distinguish it from all preceding anniversaries. And as it comes in with an increase of interest and joy, let it also come in with an increase of gratitude and thanksgiving—let it find us warm and glowing with thankfulness as well as patriotism. Let it find us lighting up the altar of our hearts in praise to God, as well as guarding that which is still bright with the flame of Liberty—let it find us Christians as well as Patriots, gathering to the festival of celebration.

It is a pleasant as well as a noble duty to commemorate an event like that, to which we have assembled to do honour. No nation but our own, since the foundation of the world, can boast such a jubilee. Time furnishes no parallel to it. And we may venture to say time never *will* furnish one. The condition of the world is such, that no revolution in favor of Freedom, which may hereafter take place, can have the peculiar character and virtue of our own. The great principles of political and national liberty are now so strongly marked out and developed to the world, that no struggle to introduce or support them will be half so wonderful or stupendous, as that upon which we can now look back with admiration. America has done too much for all the earth, to allow to any part of it, in regard to its emancipation, an equal pride, either in its achievement or its memory. She has left to other empires to do but half what she has done—and with a selfishness that may be forgiven, she has reserved to herself the reward of her valour and her toils, while to all mankind she has given—freely given, the benefit of her example. There is much in this to be proud of. There is the pride of having practically defined the Freedom, for which we fought because we boldly dared to define it—of having fixed that immutable standard of equal rights, which no chicanery of no cabinet of ministers, can for a moment hide from the people. It is founded too firmly to be shaken or undermined; and it soars to high, to be lost in the mists which vulgar prejudice, or political sophistry may attempt to throw around it.

The history of England and the continental powers from the earliest, up to the time of our Independence, will present to the most unpractised eye, at a glance, an almost unbroken series of conflicts for what was denominated Liberty—but which was never understood. It was rather a series of struggles for a change of political situation, than any thing that can be dignified with the name of Liberty. They were struggles for temporal change—because under the hopeless bondage of aristocracy leagued with monarchy and despotism, the people could not deem they should ever win the rights of Freemen—the lasting, imperishable privileges which a purely representative system will confer upon those who live under it. Those struggles were but the restlessnesses of despair—ours was the struggle of principle and reason with violence and a short-sighted monarchy. The struggles of the old world were those, oftentimes, of ambition, cloaked in zeal, for popular power, where, after all, the feigned man of the people became the worst tyrant that had oppressed them—the struggle of America was that of intelligence and virtue pressed down to the dust by arbitrary power—and conducted and supported by religion, that struggle issued in nothing short of a miracle! There was a peculiar holiness—a principle of right, which heaven seems always to have favoured, characterizing our revolutionary conflict; and perhaps the interposition of a commending providence was never more signal, than when it presented to the world the spectacle of an infant country—without resources and without hope, marching sternly and fear-

lessly to the contest with a nation that was born and rocked and reared amidst the convulsions of war—and yet coming victorious out of it. Perhaps at no time since the erection of its government had the country of our fathers such reason to boast of intellectual power, willing for the service, and within the command of its sovereign—never had it greater champions of virtuous policy—never could it produce a greater mass of political wisdom than was then concentrated in its capitol, and which, if either employed or listened to, we have every reason to believe would have led England to an honourable, and to her, a successful issue. But her councils were distracted—and the wisdom of her great men was unheeded—in her singular blindness even a Chatham was forgotten, and the very finger of God seems to have misdirected and paralyzed the powers of the mother country, just at a time when we should have despaired to cope with them in their vigour.—Such was the punishment of an unhallowed purpose—such the event of political obstinacy contending with the eternal principle of political justice.

The celebration of this day with *us*, has a moral greatness about it, which no other country can realize. The holidays of other nations are rejoicings for the putting on of some crown, or the temporary putting off of some chains—the people find a jubilee in an occasion that serves to make some tyrant conspicuous, while they degrade themselves by the celebration of it. But with *us*, there is something widely different:—there is, in these things, with *us*, an attempt to keep alive a generous and extended patriotism—that noblest

of national virtues ; and *we* celebrate the freedom of our *land*, which consists in the dearest of all freedoms the freedom of opinion, joined with a power of exercising it according to our wishes—and in that spirit which refers all our political rights and enjoyments to the sovereignty of the people. Ours is certainly a popular celebration—not the celebration of an individual's power or prerogative, but the celebration, by each man, of his own peculiar privileges. This it is, that makes it dear to us as a people, and distinguishes it from the mechanical, and we may say, the unnatural excitements that are awakened by public events, or commemorations under other forms of government.

Thus far is the genius of our liberty, and our annual recognition of it, distinct and peculiar. Our chief aim should be that it never degenerate ; and that however the world may be shaken by the heavings and strugglings of liberty under the iron hand of oppression, we may always remember how we struggled, and what we fought for—and never confound the spirit of our freedom with that restlessness, which is too often but ambition in disguise.

Next to the recollection of our enfranchisement, there is nothing we can contemplate with higher satisfaction than the government of our republic. Ours may be called emphatically a government of public opinion. Reared in the sternness of republican simplicity, every man has been led to consider himself a part of that government—and this abiding recollection has begotten an influence over his character and conduct, until, in the mass, it has impressed the whole

surface of society—and given it a propriety and dignity, that is an honour to us, and a wonder to the world. These characteristics appear singularly prominent in the exercise of our political privileges and duties ; and perhaps there cannot be a more impressive instance of the distinctness of opinion, the good sense and the decision of this great people, than the issue of the late election of Chief Magistrate over our land. The conduct of the whole canvass, though in some sections of the country it has been bitter and intemperate, yet, as a national proceeding, has been steady and determinate in its aim. In it, the genius of our institutions comes palpably and powerfully to view. We see in it, besides the practical operation of our elections, the rational and satisfactory, and honourable result of public mind when left to itself, and its own free mode of thinking and deciding. We believe that result is the same we should have beheld, had not a pen been enlisted in the cause, or a solitary voice raised in any quarter of the empire—such is our belief in the sentiment of fitness and propriety, which pervades all ranks of our countrymen. This is satisfaction in addition to that which we derive from the mode of our elections, which have all the freedom and value we could desire, without any of the turbulence and danger, as well as political and moral evils, which distinguish those of other nations, that boast of liberty and equality even next to our own—and as in a political or moral point of view, there never is greater occasion than that which summons a great people to the exercise of that power which is to elevate an individual to a government of

intelligence and virtue, so there is never a prouder object of contemplation than that of a mighty people—a mass of self-governed mind, bringing to full exhibition the independence of its sentiments and the determination of carrying them through to the utmost uninfluenced by prejudice or faction. With us, then, each man feels that his right is the first and the best in the community—he has no idea of unity in the government, without him—and there is no conviction of which you might not sooner rob him, than the proud one, that the helm of his country's ship sometimes takes direction from his arm, and that he has something to do in guiding her either in sunshine or the storm. And who would rob him of this honest, this noble pride!—take it from him, and he has little interest in looking out for quicksands or destruction. And there is a certain beauty in government, when built up, as it should be, by the hands of the people. We can forgive the republican severity of the architecture, when we know there is solidity in the material, and strength in the pillars of the temple; and when we look on the rock upon which it is founded, we can entertain no fears about its durability. Only let us aim to keep our constitution unadulterated—let us go on to improvement, without subjecting it to experiment—we have lessons of experiment in the ages before us—the best we can do is to profit by them.

There is a singular pleasure to Americans in the idea that our condition as a country has become a *sentiment*—a deep, pervading, and we hope an enduring sentiment. I apprehend this may be looked for,

particularly for its origin, in our revolution ; and the oppressive measures taken by England to induce us to submit to the crown. We contrast our present situation, with that to which a heedless and indignant policy would have subjected us. We compare what England would have made of us, to what we have effected for ourselves—we compare the noble example of our government, and the unspeakable advantages which it offers in its systems of education, with what would probably have attended our submission*—ignorance, with continual fear of insult and molestation—bondage without hope—a people without law, and tribute without even the equivalent of thanks. With the fear of such things, who can wonder at a revolution—and having rode it out, who can wonder that we celebrate it ! The remembrance of those things, associated with the conviction of what we now are, has, I repeat, become a *sentiment*, which I hope and trust will never die. Born in that convulsion, it has grown to the capacity and strength of a giant—and is now, at once our safety and our boast ! We have sometimes heard from the visionary and fearful, that our country was in danger of falling from her high estate, and of contamination from foreign vice, both social and political ; but we fear little of this ; we have no fear of it ; thank God there is no reason to fear it ! Let there be a whisper of foreign influence—let there be one

* Ministers may be said to have declared, as far as a system of policy can do it, much the same thing concerning America that the Emperor Joseph d'd about his Flemish subjects in 1789—that they were to be considered *merely as a source of revenue*. At present, we believe our charter of '76 has put an end to all fear of such declarations concerning us, by other nations. We think it is as effectual as Runnemede or the Joyous Entry.

sickly commendation or preference of the doctrines of monarchy or aristocracy, terms which it has been a part of our education to despise—let there be a suggestion even of the possibility, that any political tenets, upheld by any man in the nation, may encroach upon the old landmark of popular rights which we gave so much blood to maintain, and the electric indignation will sparkle from one end of the Union to the other—telling us, in language that cannot be mistaken, that the virtue of their fathers is yet pure in the hearts of the children. No ! our country, thank heaven, is not the soil upon which the disciples of foreign policy can sow with any hope of a harvest.

To the present condition of this vast empire, it is almost needless to revert, as a knowledge of it is familiar to every lover of his native land. And yet there is no subject to which we turn with more pride, or dwell upon with more satisfaction. The severe republican principles which originally constituted, and have increased, and will perpetuate its glory, we cannot linger upon too often or too long. I love those principles which bear the stamp of our rights and liberties upon the face of them—I love those principles which go so far to make us each proud of his country because they make each a close participator in its concerns : I love those principles which unite us all ; and which, though they have sometimes been almost forgotten in the defence of opinions, opposed indeed, but professing, on both sides, to look to the interests of the land, yet *now*, we trust in God are fast binding us all—*all* in fraternal affection, to our constitution and country.

Powerful and ingenious minds, following a train of liberal and philosophical reflections upon this nation and its institutions, have given us a striking picture of their present condition and their future fame. I am in no manner disposed to question the truth of their pencils, but we should guard against deception from the height of their colouring. There is no greater hindrance to improvement than a consciousness of perfection—and we have much reason to be wary of too great security either in the high national honor to which we have arrived, or in our unprecedented national success. Young as we are, the world looks to us as an example. And young as we are, no country can afford it with a greater bearing of dignity, or a greater certainty of respect. The possession of such privileges is the best warning, and the best incitement to preserve them with a chastened partiality. I have said, that, young as we are, we have been a singular example to the world. This country first lighted the beacon of civil and religious liberty, and what has been the consequence? Scarce had the wondering nations of the continent ascertained whither that pillar of fire was directing us through the night of our struggle, and seen the high place of Freedom, on which the morning was to break upon us, before a spirit was awakened, which pointed thitherward, and half Europe was roused and in commotion to attain it. Since that time, with wavering success, the spirit of rational liberty has been at her work—sometimes almost in despair of effecting any movement that would designate her presence or her progress—and at others

alarming kings in their palaces, and summoning to the field the whole host of imperial ministers and imperial state-papers. Alas for Naples—alas ! for Spain ! Ye have at least, in the unfortunate issues of your conflicts, been instrumental in developing the hideous features of an Alliance, the bare contemplation of which strengthens ten fold the ties of freemen, over the whole world. We are by no means slow to believe that this political resistance of the combination is the best fuel to the cause. Liberty thrives by resistance. She has undertaken a mighty work—and she is to be daunted by no difficulties, and overcome by no power under heaven. She will yet break from the trammels of the old world, and stand revealed to mankind in her naked and awful majesty !

It is natural that Americans should advocate the cause of Freedom over all the earth. Especially would she hail its establishment in those countries where the state of knowledge and refinement is such as to make it a high and rational blessing. But her generous prayers cannot yet be answered. The elements of society in such countries, are not yet prepared for the great change of Monarchy to a Republican Union--they have only a disposition towards sentiments of a liberal and popular kind ; and we must at present rest satisfied with the belief that they will yet subside into effectual and perfect harmony with our own.

But it is needless to comment upon what has been, or what is to be--the present is enough to busy the largest contemplation, and fascinate the soul of every philanthropist. The rising hopes—the untiring energies

—the astonishing improvements of our own country—its continually increasing resources—its generous disposition to improve them, which nothing can divert—the amazing expansion of its population over a surface which it almost tires the eye to scan—all these are so many distinct subjects for our wondering attention. To what a pitch of power must this nation arrive, if she preserve her institutions and her virtue uncorrupted and unblemished! to what a depth of misery is she destined if she forget the principles which raised her up, and neglect the opportunities which “God and nature have put into” her “hands.”

In our own time, where has this spirit of Independence, which we have told about, found a field for her labours! Not in Europe, where she is frowned down by a newly alarmed tyranny. Hardly alas! in Greece, where her movements are watched with jealousy by powers that should blush to lift a finger against her cause—but where, we hope in heaven, a people is yet to be born, who will have a pride to emulate the arts, and security to improve upon the days of their fathers. The cause of that country, who ancient fame has demanded and received of modern times the finest tributes of eloquence and song, has enlisted the strongest sympathies of our own. These sympathies are an honour to us—and let what will be the issue, our active encouragement of their revolution, will long remain a monument to the world of the best gratitude we could render for our own hard earned liberties!—But if tyranny still conquers in the old world we have the satisfaction of seeing the monster all but ex-

pelled from the new. As though to complete the glory of the western continent, this spirit of Freedom has again chosen it as the theatre of successful enterprise—and we have even reason to hope that as she has again unfurled her standard in her favorite hemisphere, we shall soon see it floating equally free, equally honoured, equally triumphant over the soils of both Americas. We are glad to see the south breaking away from Spanish dominion, because she is obtaining a victory over one of the oldest monarchies of Europe, but which, in its present paralyzed condition, should not, for the honour of the world, rule the pettiest province for a moment, while it can exercise no power over itself. We are glad to see them so far advanced in the great cause—and we only wish them now, a speedy **FOURTH OF JULY** to celebrate—we wish to see them bowing with us at the altar of genuine republican liberty—taking a warning as well as a lesson from our example, and when they form a government founded on equal rights, and establish it with the knowledge and religion of the people, we hope to see them avoiding every unnecessary political difference, and pressing on to national glory in an undivided, and an indivisible phalanx. May they remember that intestine divisions began the work of desolation with every republic that professed to be such, before us, and may it be the last thing they shall have cause to lament, that they were ever regardless of their privileges in their devotion to men. They have patriotism there—they have valour—they have our good wishes—and may the next sound that reaches us from that

land, be the shout of complete emancipation, echoed from all their Andes.

And there is every reason to believe that thus the struggle will terminate. If there be any thing in experience, thus it *must* terminate. The contest of South America, is that of a nation like our own, separated by a wide ocean from the country that would keep it in chains—its revolution is a more natural one, than any of the continental ones to which I have adverted. The tide of reform which has recently rolled with such a threatening of overthrow on the countries of Europe, bore on its surface a bark, piloted by Passion—manned with spirits of discontent—with a flag above them which they *called* the ensign of Liberty—she rode on a sea of blood, without a haven!—but on the waves of the Southern Revolution we behold a vessel which looks like an ark of refuge, filled with determined souls who have trusted to the waters, to escape the certainty of inglorious death, and the menaces of injustice and oppression—when those waters subside she will find an Ararat of Freedom for her resting place.

I have said that this anniversary came in, laden with fresh occasion for our thankfulness and joy. You all anticipate the event to which I refer. Its glories and its festivities will be participated by that great man—the last of the heroes who led our armies to the battles of our revolution. Yes, fellow-citizens, this day, at this moment, in the greatest metropolis of the land he bled for and won—is the illustrious LAFAYETTE joining the thanksgiving of a free people, round the

altar of their liberties. At this moment is the man who, under God, fought with your fathers for that freedom which has called you and me here this morning, in so much gratitude and pride, receiving the thanks and tears of the children, on the very soil, which he did so much to purchase for them. Never—never did the time come like this—never, next to our religion, was there subject which it will do us so much honor and so much good to remember. What was the approach of this veteran to our shores? the resuscitation of the whole country, with all the memories that had been subsiding for fifty years. What was his welcome? The rush of ten millions of freemen towards the waters that bore him, and the concentrated thunder of as many voices. What has been his progress?—through a world teeming with gratitude and fraught with the incense of pure and delighted hearts. We should all rejoice—*should* rejoice do I say!—We all *do* rejoice, that this extraordinary event has taken place in our land, as well for its effects among us, as for its influence upon the world. This great hero and philanthropist comes here, not as a conqueror amongst his vassals—not even as a benefactor to his children—but as a republican—an unqualified republican, to his equals and his friends; he is not received with the solemn dramatic pomp—with the averted homage of princes—where the heart comes in for the last share of the ceremony—not with bended knees and trembling lips—save where absolute nature has made them such—but with a direct and universal

burst of honest congratulation that has rung from the Atlantic to the Rocky mountains. And where will the echo of this welcome die ! When will the character of our homage be forgotten ! Europe is looking upon this occasion, and where will she find one that will give such a searching lesson to her conscience ! A vast nation coming to lay its thanks and its honour at the feet of an individual without the least compromise of dignity or principle or self-respect. A vast nation pouring out its heart in tribute to a man, not in view ~~to~~ his descent, or simply of his fame, but solely of his virtue and integrity ! These—these are sights that must come home to the bosoms of the intelligent and generous, wherever they are found ; and as an example to the civilized world, we may be as proud of having given it, as the lovers of rational liberty will be, that it was ever given.

To ourselves, to our country, this visit of the illustrious companion of our WASHINGTON, is pregnant, I conceive, with interest and importance. It has served, in a singular degree, to bring into one point of view, the events of those doubtful days which “ tried men’s souls,” to beget a spirit of inquiry into the facts of our revolutionary history ; to carry back the mind to those times when our country was weak and our hopes small, so that it may now behold the contrast, and be humbled in gratitude before a wonder-working Providence. It has served to give fresh circulation to our patriotism, and to establish a noble rallying-point for our recollections. It has served to give

us a practical and dignified sentiment of patriot virtue, of honourable ambition, and noble benevolence ; and more than all, it has served to strengthen and cement the bonds of this mighty Union. This is a satisfying and an elevating reflection. Passing from one extremity of our vast empire to the other, while this veteran hero has drawn all our hearts towards him, he has drawn them all nearer to each other. From contemplating him who became so active to purchase them, we all turn with instinctive interest to our common liberties, and who will say that any event, which renews and strengthens, and gives new value to love of country, is not to be hailed with transport and remembered with undying affection !

And let it be so remembered. Ye who have seen this good and great benefactor of the world, and have listened to his sentiments, and have gone up with him and the thousands of your countrymen to that sacred ground, where the morning of our toils commenced, you have felt enough, to become still more thankful to God and more proud of your privileges.

And as to the sentiment of our Independence, let it be that deep and firm rooted sentiment which fears nothing but national unrighteousness—boasts nothing but national respectability, and prays for nothing but national principle. Let ours be a *moral Independence* ; a godlike unstooping Independence, which knows no honor like a country's dignity, and no glory like national virtue and religion : which looks to other greatness than that which is defined by con-

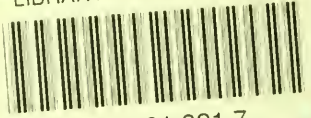
quest, and other respect than that which is the homage of fear—which throws forward the gaze of a nation to an honour higher than that which she may have among the empires of the earth, and makes the favour of heaven rather than the praise of men, her prayer and her pride.







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